

1. A method for facilitating refunds in a postage metering system, the method comprising the steps of:

- receiving at a computer a request for a refund of a postage amount;
- using the computer for accessing a dispute account database for identifying a dispute account associated with the request;
- determining, via the computer, if a value in the dispute account is acceptable for permitting a refund of the postage amount; and
- at times when the value is determined to be acceptable for permitting the refund of the postage amount, refunding the postage amount to a user of the postage meter.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising sending enabling data from the computer to the postage meter, the enabling data useable by the postage meter to add the postage amount to a vault of the postage meter to effectuate the refunding of the postage amount.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising adjusting the value in the dispute account to account for the postage amount refunded.

4. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising sending funds equivalent to the postage amount to a user identified account thereby effectuating the refunding of the postage amount.

5. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising mailing funds equivalent to the postage amount to the user thereby effectuating the refunding of the postage amount.

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6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein at times when the value is determined to be not acceptable, sending a message for one of printing and display at the postage meter, the message advising that the request for a refund has been denied.

7. A postage metering system comprising:
a postage meter having a vault that accounts for postage dispensed by the postage meter;
a data center in communication with the postage meter, the data center having a central processing unit and a dispute account database, the dispute account data base having a dispute account associated with the postage meter;
means for permitting communication between the postage meter and the data center;
wherein at times when the data center receives a request for a refund of a postage amount from the postage meter the central processing unit determines if a value in the dispute account is acceptable for permitting a refund of the postage amount and if it is the central processing unit refunds the postage amount to a user of the postage meter.

8. A postage meter system as recited in claim 7, wherein the postage meter includes a printing device and the central processing unit refunds the postage amount to the user by sending enabling data useable by the computer for adding the postage amount to the postage meter vault.

9. A postage metering device as recited in claim 8, wherein the printing device prints a receipt of the postage amount refunded.

